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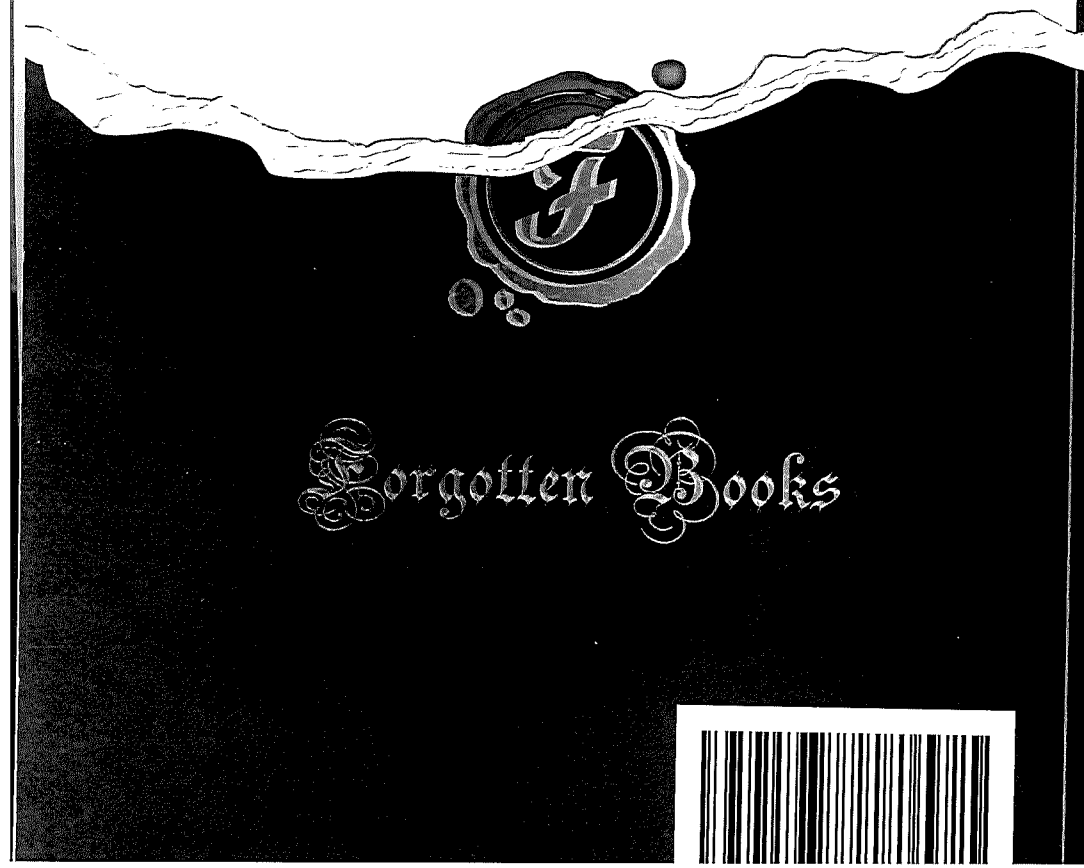

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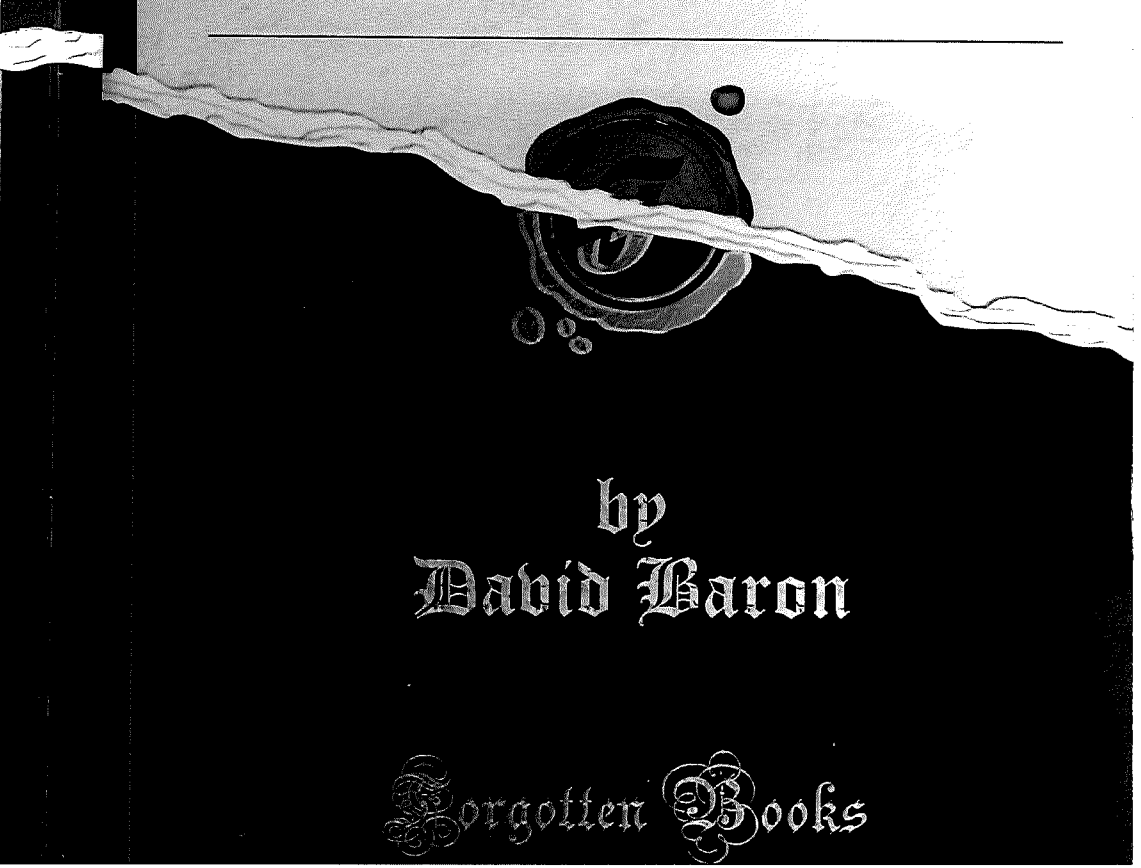
The Jewish Problem, Its Solution, or Israels Present and Future

by

David Baron



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The Jewish Problem, Its Solution, or Israel's Present and Future

By

David Baron

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INTRODUCTION.

THOSE who were present at the summer conferences at Northfield, Mass., in the months of July and August, 1890, will not soon forget DAVID BARON and his Bible Readings and Addresses. He is a converted Jew; and is well named *David* Baron, for he is a true prince of the Davidic House.

There was an indescribable charm about the man. His knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and his deep insight into them; his keen discernment of the exquisite shades of meaning by which the original words differed and were distinguished, and the perfect familiarity he exhibited with both the original Word of God and all the light which the Jewish customs, manners, and religious and national life cast upon that Word, together with a peculiar unction which qualified his whole manner—all these peculiarities contributed to render his services doubly interesting and helpful. After the Conferences closed, there were still at the hotels and boarding-houses a large number of visitors who clamoured for a continuance of the feast; and

Mr. Baron gave daily Readings in the Parlour of the large "Northfield," or in the Congregational church.

At my earnest entreaty, Mr. Baron wrote out one of his best Bible addresses for publication, and it is herewith put into printed form. It lacks only the personal presence of its author to make it a perfect reproduction of one of the most charming and effective addresses I ever heard. It is not too much to say that, to understand this address and to grasp its great expository argument, is to get the key to all Scriptures pertaining to the past, present, or future, of God's ancient people. This little brochure is called the "Jewish Problem"; it deserves to be called the "Problem Solved"—for it is the solution of the historic and prophetic enigma.

I commend it to every candid student of the Word of God, and especially to all who pray for the restoration of Israel. David Baron has himself gone to Jerusalem.* May he in the City of the Great King witness the gathering of the scattered tribes, and their penitent and believing acceptance of the Messiah.

ARTHUR T. PIERSON.

* Mr. Baron has now returned to England. *See Appendix.*

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Jeremiah xxx. 1–17.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah.

For thus saith the Lord;
We have heard a voice of trembling,
Of fear, and not of peace.
Ask ye now, and see
Whether a man doth travail with child?
Wherefore do I see every man
With his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail,
And all faces are turned into paleness?
Alas! for that day is great,
So that none is like it:
It is even the time of Jacob's trouble.
But he shall be saved out of it.
For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts,
That I will break his yoke from off thy neck,
And will burst thy bonds,
And strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:
But they shall serve the Lord their God,
And David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.
Therefore fear thou not, O My servant Jacob, saith the Lord;
Neither be dismayed, O Israel:
For, lo, I will save thee from afar,
And thy seed from the land of their captivity;
And Jacob shall return,
And shall be in rest, and be quiet,

And none shall make him afraid.
For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee:
Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee,
Yet will I not make a full end of thee:
But I will correct thee in measure,
And will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

For thus saith the Lord,
Thy bruise is incurable,
And thy wound is grievous.
There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up:
Thou hast no healing medicines.
All thy lovers have forgotten thee;
They seek thee not;
For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy,
With the chastisement of a cruel one,
For the multitude of thine iniquity;
Because thy sins were increased.
Why criest thou for thine affliction?
Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity:
Because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.
Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured;
And all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity;
And they that spoil thee shall be a spoil,
And all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.
For I will restore health unto thee,
And I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord;
Because they called thee an Outcast, saying,
This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM.

I.

Is there a yet Future Restoration?

UNTIL all the writings of the prophet were compiled in one book as we now have it, Jeremiah xxx. and xxxi. formed a distinct prophecy, and was doubtless in circulation amongst the people in a separate prophetic book; and in verse 2 we read that it is a "book" dictated by God Himself. The subject, then, with which it deals must be one concerning which He is especially anxious to reveal His thoughts. Whatever man may think of it, He considers this matter of immense importance, so that every word must be preserved.

> "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book."

This book, dictated by God Himself, is a very remarkable one; for though it concerns Israel, it is addressed chiefly to the Gentile nations.

"For thus saith the Lord: Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations. Publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel. . . . Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jeremiah xxxi. 7–10).

It is a testimony, then, not so much to Israel as to the Gentile nations about Israel. Just as, in the epistle to the Romans, we find, as it were, an epistle within an epistle; three chapters—ix., x., xi.—expressly indited by the Spirit of God, for the purpose of enlightening Gentile Christians with regard to God's purposes in Israel. The apostle is most impressed with the importance of the Church having correct views on this subject; and feels that he cannot leave them ignorant of this mystery, lest, through the erroneous notion that God hath cast away His people Israel which He foreknew, and that the special promises and privileges reserved to Israel nationally in the Word of God have been transferred to the Church, they should fall into the danger of self-conceit.[1]

So here, through the prophet Jeremiah, there is a definite message, a proclamation, a warning, to the chief of the Gentile nations, and to the isles

[1] Romans xi. 25.

afar off, to the same purport, viz., that God is not yet done with Israel—that "He that scattereth Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock."

In this special book, written at the express dictation of God, we have the only true solution of the apparently more and more difficult Jewish question. Apart from God's revelation, the Jew is an enigma, a problem beyond the vain attempts of man to solve; and attempts of the kind, if not based upon the Word of God, are futile and impious. The future of Israel is one of those subjects concerning which the great God has deigned to speak; and however difficult or improbable to man that future may appear, it behoves us to believe and receive, and not to speculate or rebel.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Jehovah."

Let us examine this special proclamation addressed to the Gentile nations with regard to Israel. It contains, I believe, a programme of events drawn up in chronological order, with regard to the future of that people, so wonderful and "terrible from their beginning hitherto."[1]

[1] Isaiah xviii. 2.

The first item in that programme is *Restoration.*

> "For lo, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it" (Jeremiah xxx. 3).

Note the frequent reiteration of the august and glorious name JEHOVAH in this, as in the other verses of this prophecy; as if to give credibility to the announcements made, and to test our faith in the accomplishment of those things for which the eternal, unchangeable name, Jehovah, stands pledged.

Now, what are we to do with this and other prophecies of a Restoration of the people of Israel to the land of their fathers?

There are several methods of interpretation which seem alike unsatisfactory, and are perhaps responsible for a great deal of Jewish and Gentile unbelief. There is, first of all, the old-fashioned way of so-called spiritualizing the prophecies—making ISRAEL and ZION to mean the Church, and THE LAND to signify heaven; but I confess this system of interpretation has no consistency about it, and makes the Word of God the most meaningless and unintelligible book in the world. For instance, we read here:

> "I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah; . . . and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers."

If Israel be the Church, who is Judah? If Judah be the Church, who is Israel? What is the "captivity" the Church has endured? and where is "the land" from which the Church has been driven out, and to which it will return? At the end of the prophecy we read:

> "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kedron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever" (Jeremiah xxxi. 38-40).

In what particular locality in heaven are the tower of Hananeel and the corner gate? And what will our allegorical interpretations make of the hill Gareb, and Goath, and the brook Kedron? All these are known to me in the environs of the literal Jerusalem in Canaan; but I confess some difficulty in locating them in heavenly places. If Israel does not mean Israel, and "the land God gave to the fathers" does not mean Palestine, then I do not know what is meant.

The announcement is: "He that scattereth Israel will gather him." Now, when it comes to *scattering*—of course, this is allowed to refer to literal Israel, to the Jews, "scattered and peeled"; but when, in the same sentence, a *gathering* of the same people is mentioned—oh, this is the gathering of the spiritual Israel. What consistency or honesty, I pray, is there in such interpretations!

"To what may we attribute the loose system of interpreting the language of the Psalms and prophets, and the extravagant expectations of the universal conversion of the world by the preaching of the gospel, which may be observed in many Christian writers?

"To nothing so much, I believe, as to the habit of inaccurately interpreting the word 'Israel,' and the consequent application of promises to the Gentile churches, with which they have nothing to do. The least errors in theology always bear fruit. Never does man take up an incorrect principle of interpreting Scripture without that principle entailing awkward consequences, and colouring the whole tone of his religion.

"I do not deny that Israel was a peculiar typical people, and that God's relations to Israel were

meant to be a type of relations to His believing people all over the world. I do not forget that it is written, 'As face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man';[1] and that whatever spiritual truths are taught in prophecy concerning Israelitish hearts, are applicable to the hearts of Gentiles. I would have it most distinctly understood that God's dealings with individual Jews and Gentiles are precisely one and the same. Without repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of heart, no individual Jew or Gentile shall ever be saved. What I protest against is, the habit of allegorizing plain sayings of the Word of God concerning the future history of the *nation* Israel, and explaining away the fulness of their contents in order to accommodate them to the Gentile Church. I believe the habit to be unwarranted by anything in Scripture, and to draw after it a long train of evil consequences."[2]

Like thousands more, the writer has in the infinite grace of God been brought out of the darkness of Rabbinical Judaism into the marvellous light and liberty of the glorious gospel of Christ. He accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of

DAVID BARON CONVERSION WAS IN 1875

[1] Proverbs xxvii. 19.

[2] "Scattered and Gathered," by John Charles Ryle, D.D., Bishop of Liverpool.

Israel and Saviour of the world, on the ground of a literal interpretation of the prophecies concerning Him; and he cannot consistently, without doing outrage to his convictions, accept one principle of interpretation for one set of prophecies which have already been fulfilled, and another principle of interpretation for another set of prophecies not yet fulfilled. Rather, he honestly believes that the manner of fulfilment of those prophecies which are now history, supplies the only sound basis for the interpretation of those prophecies with regard to Israel and the kingdom which yet await their fulfilment. "Though He tarry, wait for Him"; and when the fulness of time is come, it will be seen that though man's systems and principles of interpretation be diverse, God's manner of fulfilling His promises is one.

Another way of dealing with these prophecies of a Restoration is to make them refer to the gathering of the Jews into the Church. But this position also is untenable. The Jews will not be nationally gathered into the Church; for even in the New Testament we have the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, *as nations*, running parallel with, and continuing separate from, the Church throughout all the period of its history on earth;[1] and in

[1] 1 Corinthians x. 32.

Rom. xi. 25, the inspired apostle is commissioned to announce to the Gentile believers the fact that all Israel will not be saved; that the "hardness in part" which has befallen that nation will continue until *after* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

"He that scattered Israel": From whence? from the Church, or gospel blessings? No, no; but from Palestine. "Will gather him:" Where to? why, surely, to the land which He gave to their fathers, from which Israel, on account of disobedience, was banished and scattered.

But perhaps the most plausible way of explaining such predictions is to represent them as having had their fulfilment at the restoration from Babylon, since they were given before the Babylonish captivity. To this I reply that this and other predictions are in terms of which we vainly seek an adequate fulfilment at that period. It may be as well to give here a few reasons in justification of the position that there is a future Restoration of the literal Israel to the land which by unconditional promise and covenant was given to them as an everlasting possession.[1]

[1] Genesis xv. 7-21; xvii. 7, 8, 19, 21.

I. The Restoration promised here is a *complete* one:

> "I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah;"

and the number who will return shall be "a great company,"[1] so that even the whole of the promised land will not be large enough for them.[2] The same appears in that remarkable prophecy of Isaiah xi., which, on whatever system of interpretation we adopt, is admittedly future in its application, where "the outcasts of Israel" and "the dispersed of Judah" are to be gathered together. The same appears again in Ezekiel xxxvii., where there is a future announced for the whole twelve tribes reunited in one kingdom. Many more passages might be cited which speak of a complete Restoration of the entire nation in terms most unequivocal and minute; which certainly could not be said to have received their fulfilment in the—comparatively speaking—mere handful who returned from Babylon.

II. After the Restoration predicted in this and other prophecies, Israel is to enjoy at least national independence, if not supremacy.

[1] Jeremiah xxxi. 8. [2] Zech. x. 10; Isa. xlix. 19, 20.

> "For it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him" (Jeremiah xxx. 8).

Backsliding Israel, because he served not Jehovah with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, was to be taught a lesson by comparison; and was given over by God to be in servitude for a time to the Gentiles.

> "Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in want of all things; and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck" (Deut. xxviii. 47, 48).

But this iron yoke of Gentile oppression was not to last for ever. This is clear even from the solemn words of the Lord Jesus, when, after announcing the fact that Israel "shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations,"[1] He suspends in the midst of the darkness of threatened judgment the bright star of hope which ultimately shall banish the darkness, and cause judgment to be forgotten in the abundance of mercy; inasmuch as He announces a limit to the time of Israel's servitude to Gentile oppression:

> "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

[1] Luke xxi. 24.

And when they be fulfilled, the yoke will be broken, and Israel will once more not only be free and independent, but nationally *supreme* among the nations.[1]

But has this ever yet taken place? Let those who point to the restoration from Babylon as an exhaustive fulfilment of these prophecies compare, for instance, such a passage as Isaiah xiv. 1–3, where we read that after

> "Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors."

Let them compare this with Nehemiah ix. 36, 37, which describes the actual condition of the people after their restoration:

> "Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."

[1] Isaiah lx. 9–16.

III. According to the express declaration of the prophet Isaiah, there is to be a "second" Restoration, which is to be universal in its character.

> "And it shall to come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah xi. 11, 12).

Now, there has been no second Restoration as yet; neither could the return from Babylon be said to be a gathering from the "four corners of the earth"; that captivity having been local in its character, and of short duration. Never before the dispersion inaugurated by Titus, could the *scattering* of the people be said to have been universal; hence they could never before have been *gathered* from the four corners of the earth.

IV. Israel has never yet in all its fulness possessed the land which God has promised them; and Palestine may still be said to be "the land of promise." Its boundaries are given in Gen. xv. 18; Ezek. xlvii. 13; and xlviii. 1. Dr. Alex. Keith, author of "Evidences of Prophecy," has given us

the results of his personal investigations and measurements in his book called "The Land of Israel," according to which the extent of the promised land is 300,000 square miles.

The infidel Voltaire is said to have scoffingly remarked on Exod. iii. 8, where God says that He has come down to deliver Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a "good land and a large," that the God of the Jews must have been a petty God, because He gave them a land not larger in size than Wales, and called it a "large land." But this is only in keeping with the style of infidel scoffers in general, who find it easy to ridicule things about which they know very little. It is only ignorance that could represent the land called in Exod. iii. 8, a "large land" as being no larger in size than Wales. Why, it is twice and a half as large as Great Britain and Ireland. And yet Christians who do not believe in a future possession by Israel of the whole land which God has promised them, really give occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme; for if there be no future occupation of the land by Israel, the solemn word of God, on which His oath is staked, would fail of fulfilment.[1]

[1] Genesis xv. 8–18.

What though generations may pass, and instead of the fathers may be the children: "heaven and earth shall pass away," but God's oath and promise cannot fail.

It is very remarkable that when we come to the future re-division of the land in the last chapters of Ezekiel, it is no longer merely from Dan to Beer-sheba with which the prophet deals; but faith and inspiration combine to claim all the promised land contained within the boundaries of the original covenant in Gen. xv. This, by the way, is a sufficient answer to those who ask whether there is room enough in Palestine for the 12,000,000 Jews at present in the world. Note also that according to these same last chapters of Ezekiel, there is to be a different location of the twelve tribes at the re-division of the land. What can we make of this, if there be no future Restoration of Israel to the promised land?

V. Leaving out for the moment the brief ordeal and baptism of suffering which awaits Israel immediately on their return to their land, with which we shall deal presently, the Restoration announced in this and other prophecies is to be followed by a *National Conversion* (Jer. xxx. 8–10). Israel nationally is then to enter into the blessing of the New

Covenant announced in this very prophecy ;[1] which the election of individuals from all nations now enjoy, as it were, by anticipation. The same is clearly announced in Ezek. xxxvi. 24–28 :

> "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers ; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God."

And by the same prophet in the following chapter—xxxvii. 21–23 , and in many other passages of Scripture. Now, such a national conversion has surely never yet taken place. The restoration from Babylon was followed by the most appalling and universal national apostasy, which culminated in the rejection of the Son of God, and the consequent dispersion of the people into all the four corners of the earth.

VI. There is to be a gathering of Israel to the land of their fathers, which is to be *final*. This is

[1] Jeremiah xxxi. 31–34.

announced in this very prophecy, where, at the end of chapter xxxi., after describing with the greatest minuteness and geographical exactness the rebuilding of the Holy City, it closes with the declaration "it shall not be plucked up nor thrown down any more for ever." The same is again emphatically proclaimed by the prophet Amos :

> "I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos ix. 14, 15).

Now, supposing that since these inspired announcements by Amos and Jeremiah there had already taken place a hundred dispersions and a hundred restorations, we would still be justified in believing in yet another gathering, after which there should be no more scattering.

II.

"The Time of Israel's Trouble."

THE second item in the Divine programme of the future of Israel, as given in this divinely dictated "book," is, to use the language of inspiration, the "time of Jacob's trouble."

> "And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith Jehovah: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah xxx. 4–7).

"What!" you say, "will not all the sufferings of Israel through all these centuries suffice? Is there a yet future baptism of fire, through which they must pass?" Yes, this is clear from this prophecy, as well as from many others. Listen to this declaration of the prophet Ezekiel:

> "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: Son of man, the house of Israel is to Me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because ye are all become dross, behold therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out My fury upon you" (Ezek. xxii. 17–22).

Here, too, the terrible fiery furnace immediately succeeds the gathering into the midst of Jerusalem.

But may not this "time of Jacob's trouble" refer to the awful calamity which befell the nation at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which was repeated with perhaps still greater severity about sixty-five years later in the time of Bar Cochba and Hadrian? No! The ordeal announced here through which Israel is to pass is terribly sharp, but brief in its duration, as suggested by the very figure employed—which is that of a woman in travail; and it ends in their salvation: while the sufferings at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus only inaugurated a long series of dispersions,

massacres, spoliations, and oppressions, which has already continued for more than eighteen centuries. Of course, it is not denied that these long-enduring sufferings were predicted in the Word of God, and have their place and relation to Israel's apostasy and future glory; and, in one sense, "the time of Jacob's trouble" may be only a summing up, a culmination, of all that has preceded: but it is clear that there is a time of purging by fiery judgment awaiting Israel *after the return to their land*, which will immediately precede their national conversion and the revelation to them of the Messiah, whom, as a nation, they have so long rejected.

What have we in the last chapters of Zechariah?—Israel in their land; not necessarily the entire nation, but the bulk of it, evidently restored in a state of unbelief. Then comes this awful announcement:

> "Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God" (Zech. xiv. 1, 2; xiii. 8, 9).

"This is the immediate prospect after restoration to Palestine of the people who rebelled against the Most High, and rejected His Son, and always resisted the Holy Spirit—a furnace seven times heated, and anguish as acute as are the pangs of a woman in travail. Alas! poor Israel, who desire the day of the Lord, to what end is it for you? Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light, even very dark and no brightness in it?[1] But, blessed be God, His anger will not endure for ever; 'though weeping may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning.' And even when Israel sits in darkness—a deeper darkness than they have ever been in yet—'the Lord shall be a light unto them;'[2] and, although their tribulation and anguish shall be so great that there has been none like it, in the midst of wrath God will remember mercy; and, according to His promise, He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob.[3]

"Suddenly, when the cloud will be thickest, and

[1] Amos v. 18, 20. [2] Micah vii. 8. [3] Amos ix. 8.

the anguish most acute; when even the small remnant that shall be left of Israel shall despair of hope, and Israel's enemies be most certain in their own minds of accomplishing their purpose of utterly exterminating that people whom they will think has been given over to them as a prey; when the proud spirit of the haughty Jew shall be broken, and humility and penitence take the place of stubbornness and pride; when the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, saying, 'Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach'; and when the whole people, brought to such extremities that they will be willing to receive help from whatsoever quarter it may come, cry 'Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence! Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people!'[1]—then, suddenly, with the speed of lightning, and attended by all His saints and hosts of angels, shall the same Jesus, who ascended bodily and visibly on a cloud from the Mount of Olivet, so and in like manner, be revealed again; but this time in a special and peculiar manner, as Israel's King and Deliverer.

[1] Isaiah lxiv. 1, 9.

'And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,' and from thence He shall 'go forth and fight against those nations (Israel's enemies) as in the day of battle.'[1] 'And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army' and He will go forth

> 'with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many' (Joel ii. 11; Isa. lxvi. 15, 16).

"Just as that shepherd of Bethlehem—himself one of the most perfect and beautiful types of Him who is his great Son, as well as Lord—'slew both the lion and the bear,' and saved from their jaws the lamb which was taken possession of by them as their prey: so will the Shepherd of Israel 'save' the remnant of His people from the hands and jaws of those who are stronger than they; and slay them who devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped with their feet, His chosen, with a fierceness exceeding even that of the bear and the lion."[2]

[1] Zechariah xiv. 3, 4.

[2] "Rays of Messiah's Glory," by David Baron.

III.

Israel's Conversion.

THE third item with regard to Israel's future, as given in this chapter, is *Israel's Conversion and the establishment of the throne of David.*

> "I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

It is unnecessary to prove that by "David their King," is here meant their Messiah. Even the Talmud says, "David their King, whom *I will raise up unto them*"; and not "whom I *have* raised up unto them"—showing that it is not king David, who reigned in Jerusalem some four hundred years before, who is meant, but the Messiah who is to be "of David's seed."[1] In truth, He is the *true* David, the Beloved; the King after God's own heart, in whom the promises of God centre.

There are a number of passages where the name David is applied to the King Messiah in the Old Testament; but two are especially remarkable. In Hosea iii., after that wonderful prophecy

[1] Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6.

delivered nearly eight hundred years before Christ, and which answers exactly to the present state of Israel, it is stated, "afterward"—that is, when their present condition of banishment from their land and apostasy from God shall come to an end—

> "shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall fear Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days." Hos 3:5

"They shall *seek* Jehovah their God, and David their King." "They shall *serve* Jehovah their God, and David their King": so that there is neither true seeking nor true serving of Jehovah God, if we do not also seek and serve David (Messiah) the King, notwithstanding all that poor Israel now thinks to the contrary.

And note the more than human character and dignity of this great David. He claims equal allegiance with God; for whatever is implied by "they shall serve Jehovah their God," must be meant also in the words "and they shall serve David their King." But there is a glorious truth wrapped up in these two passages, which must not be overlooked. In foretelling their state during the time when Israel shall neither serve God nor yet fall into idolatry, the prophet says that "the children of Israel shall abide many days"—the Hebrew idiomatic expression meaning a *long*,

Hos 3:4

indefinite period—"without a king and without a prince." How wonderfully true has this proved; and with what wonderful accuracy has the inspired announcement been fulfilled!

Just about the time of Zedekiah, the last prince who ever sat on the throne of David, the prophet Ezekiel came with this startling announcement: "Remove the mitre and take off the crown; it shall not be (or, *this is no more it*): exalt the low, abase the high (or, *let anarchy and usurpation of the throne of David continue*). I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; this shall be no more until He come whose right it is; to Him it shall be given."[1] And so it has proved. For all those centuries before Christ, and for all these nearly nineteen centuries since Christ—a fact which only inspiration could have foreseen—in spite of every effort and Jewish ambition, there has been no re-establishment of the throne of David.

It is true that in the second century B.C. a kingdom existed for a short time in Judea; but the kings were not of the house of David, nor even of the tribe of Judah, and are not recognised as kings by God, who by oath appointed David and his seed to be the only legitimate kings in Zion.

[1] Lit. Hebrew, Ezek. xxi. 26, 27.

"Until He come, whose right it is: to Him it shall be given."

Who is this but Jesus of Nazareth?—"the King of the Jews," concerning whom it was announced at His birth: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." According to the commonly-received view, there is indeed no importance in the title "Son of David" as belonging to Christ; except, perhaps, as proving that He descended from David, and enabling us to trace His genealogy. But it is evident that the announcement of the angel attaches to it far greater importance than this, inasmuch as it asserts for Him, as Son of David, "the throne of His father David." "And what throne is that? Not the throne of heaven, nor yet the throne of God's spiritual kingdom; for neither of these was, or could have been, occupied by David, or could be inherited by Christ as 'Son of David.' The throne intended, then, must be the throne of the kingdom of Israel, and that it is so, the words of the angel testify; for having said, 'The Lord God shall give to Him the throne of

His father David,' he adds: 'And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.'"

The idea now generally entertained is that the throne on which Christ now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high is that meant by the angel in this announcement to Mary; but this view is not based on a comprehensive and mature study of the Word of God. Take, for instance, Rev. iii. 21:

> "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Here the Lord Himself tells us that the throne over which He now sits is not His, but the Father's, who invited Him to share it with Him as a token of His perfect satisfaction with the finished work of His beloved Son; and that He only occupies this place until He takes possession of His own throne, on which He will grant the privilege of sitting with Him to all those who have been faithful to Him in this rebellious world. When Christ appeared for the first time, had Israel but known the day of His visitation, the kingdom might have at that time been restored to them; but "His own received Him not." They rejected Him, and sent a messenger after Him, saying: "We will not have this man to reign over us."

But did Israel's unbelief and rejection of their King frustrate the purposes of God? Did it for ever rob Christ of that to which He has a right as the Son of David, and which is pre-eminently the reward of His humiliation and pouring out His soul unto death? "Yet have I anointed My king on the holy hill of Zion." Man's unbelief and disobedience may defer, to his own hurt, the accomplishment of the purposes of God; but man's unbelief and the very gates of hell *cannot frustrate them.*

"There is an old saying which Bengel was very fond of: '*Deus habet horas et moras*'—God has His own times and ways. There are pauses in history; but during those pauses, which are occasioned by the unbelief, the ignorance, and the disobedience of His own people, and are made subservient to the wisdom of God, the great Musician does not forget the melody, and at the proper time it is continued."[1]

The King whom Israel insulted and delivered over to the cross, departed for a season with the awful words:

> "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew xxiii. 38, 39).

[1] Dr. A. Saphir.

Or, as we have it in Hosea v. 15:

> "I will go and return unto My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face; in their affliction they shall seek Me early."

Meanwhile, another underlying parallel purpose of God, even the mystery of the Church, has been revealed, which more than ever makes manifest the manifold wisdom of God. But what about the "Tabernacle of David"? What about Christ's relation to Israel? Did He renounce? Did He say to Israel, "I have done with you? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth—and for ever." Oh, no! Behold here too the glorious star of hope suspended right in the midst of the gloom of impending judgment and desolation.

The King's departure, however long its duration, is but for a limited time: "Until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." *Till* they acknowledge their offence and *seek My face*; and then, corresponding with what was said above, it is added: "In their affliction—in the time of Jacob's *trouble* (the same word in the original being used in both places)—they shall seek Me early." And when once they seek Him, that face, which "in a little wrath has been hid

from them for a moment,"[1] will be lifted upon them in full splendour. "I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up;"[2] "and the Lord shall yet reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously."[3] Till then, and for these many days, "the children of Israel abide without a king and without a prince."[4] Note that they are not only without a king, *but also without a prince.*

Now, compare this with Ezekiel xxxvii., and see a most beautiful truth about the Lord Jesus in relation to Israel's future.

> "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes and do them.

[1] Isa. liv. 8. [2] Amos ix. 11, 12. [3] Isa. xxiv. 23. [4] Hosea iii. 4.

> And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt: and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and My servant David shall be their Prince for ever" (Ezekiel xxxvii. 21–25).

"And David My servant *shall be king over them*; . . . and My servant David *shall be their prince for ever*" Here is both Israel's King and Prince in the same person.

But, you say, do not the two terms substantially mean the same thing? No; the word in the original translated "prince" in this passage, does not mean prince in an hereditary sense of the word. "Nassi," the term used, signifies *one exalted, or elected by the free will of the people.* What a glimpse we get here of the change that will come over Israel at the appearing of Jesus Christ! At His first coming, Israel, as a nation, deliberately rejected Him. "Not this man, but Barabbas!" they said: and as to Christ, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "We will not have this man to reign over us," was their cry. But the national verdict with regard to Jesus of Nazareth will be revoked; the grand mistake of the Jewish people shall yet be acknowledged and repented of. Instead of "Crucify Him!" they will cry "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the

Lord." They will recognise His claims, not only as "the King," the one whose right it is to reign over them; but they will deliberately declare Him their "Nassi," their elected or exalted one.

This simply means that Israel will ratify God's choice. David himself, whose name Messiah bears, is a beautiful type of Christ in this as in many other respects. In 1 Samuel xvi. we read of his being chosen and anointed as king over Israel by the command of God. But what followed? Did he at once commence his reign? For fifteen years he was a fugitive; his claims were unrecognised; his home was the Cave of Adullam, or the wilderness of Judah. There was another king, who hated David, and disputed his sovereignty.

Meanwhile, instead of a throne on Mount Zion and the hosts of Israel, his court was outside the camp, and his following consisted of his brethren and all his father's house: "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented"—a strange, typical lot, not numbering altogether more than about "four hundred men."[1] But at last, after those years of rejection, the people's heart turned toward him, "and the men of Judah came, and"—as if he had never been anointed king

[1] 1 Samuel xxii. 1, 2.

before—"there" (in Hebron) "they anointed David king over the house of Judah."[1]

The rest of the tribes of Israel still opposed David, and ranged themselves under the banner of Ishbosheth; until about seven years later the heart of all the people turned toward him, and "all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron before Jehovah, and they anointed David king over Israel."[2]

Thus it is with Christ. From His incarnation He was designated King of the Jews. Jehovah Himself has anointed Him as His King on the holy hill of Zion; and it was even then announced that "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." But my people knew not the day of their visitation; and for all these centuries have resolutely, as a nation, refused to acknowledge His claims. Meanwhile, also, the god of this world, "the prince of the power of the air," is permitted in the infinite wisdom of God to usurp Christ's sovereignty over the nations; and the followers of our blessed, glorious Master are a mere handful of *individuals* from all nations who

[1] 2 Samuel ii. 4. [2] 2 Samuel v. 3.

spiritually are like that motley crowd in the cave of Adullam, "in distress, in debts, and discontented, or bitter of soul" because of a sense of sin and sorrow. These are painfully conscious that Jesus Christ is not yet accepted King over the earth; for instead of a crown which will come by and by, we have to take up His cross and follow Him, "without the camp bearing His reproach."[1] But as sure as there was a cross planted for Him on that Golgotha, outside the walls of Jerusalem, so surely, if the word and oath of our God stand for anything, is there yet to be a glorious throne for our Redeemer and Master on Mount Zion. "The stone which the builders have rejected has become the headstone of the corner"; and, however marvellous and improbable in our eyes, Israel shall yet "serve Jehovah their God, and David their King," and deliberately elect Him, whom during centuries of unbelief they have despised and rejected, as their "Nassi"—their freely chosen ruler and prince.

[1] Hebrews xiii. 13.

IV.

The Present Condition of Israel.

ISRAEL'S *present state, and the miracle of their preservation.* This is the next item in the divinely dictated message through the prophet Jeremiah.

After proclaiming the fact of their restoration, and describing the glad day when the remnant of Israel, after passing through the purging ordeal, shall "call on the name of Jehovah, to serve Him with one consent,"[1] we read in the tenth verse:

> "Therefore fear thou not, O My servant Jacob, saith Jehovah; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid."

It is beautiful to note how the people are encouraged to draw consolation and hope in their present desolation and sufferings, from the brightness and glory which is yet to break upon them. "Therefore"—in view of the glorious prospect just dilated on—"fear thou not, O My servant Jacob."

[1] Zephaniah iii. 9.

"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Gloomy indeed is the prospect of the present state of the Jewish people in its dispersion and unbelief, if viewed apart from the bright morn of promise so clearly foretold in the Word of God; but, in the light of the bright future, even the present darkness and gloom become less intense. How full of consolation is the assurance that "*Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid*"!

The present state of the peculiar people has been foretold with minute exactness in predictions like the following:

> "For lo, I will command, and I will sift (lit. *toss* or *shake about*) the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is tossed about in a sieve" (Amos ix. 9).

Or, in the words of Jeremiah:

> "I will even give them up to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth for evil; to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them" (xxiv. 9, R.V.).

O ye who doubt the inspiration of the Book of books, compare these prophecies of thousands of years ago with what is going on before your very eyes! How can we account for the repeated dispersions, and the continued, unceasing wanderings

and strange restlessness of the Jew, apart from these ancient inspired utterances? That Palestine should be vanquished, and that Israel should be cast out of their own land, or even be dispersed among the nations, was within the range of human possibility, and mayhap within the power of a shrewd observer to forecast; but, that for centuries and centuries, a people, vanquished and scattered out of their own country, instead of becoming absorbed among the nations—as has been the case with other peoples; and instead of taking root and finding rest in the new soil to which they have been transplanted, should retain a separate existence, everywhere dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations, yet in all places kept in a state of unrest, and continually agitated or tossed about: who, but He whose hand has kept up this standing miracle as His witness among the nations could have foreseen or foretold *that*?

Before even their first settlement in Palestine, Moses predicted that, if Israel sinned, and was disobedient, "Jehovah shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; . . . *and among all these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot find rest*" And as the mouth of the Lord has spoken, so it has been all these centuries. What is

the monkish legend of the "Wandering Jew" but a parable of the whole Jewish nation? The original version of the legend is as follows:

Joseph Cartophilus, a Jew, was door-keeper at the Prætorium of Pontius Pilate when Jesus was led away to be crucified. As Jesus halted upon the threshold of the Prætorium, Cartophilus struck Him on the loins, and said, "Move faster. Why do you stop here?" Jesus turned round to him, and said: "I go, but you will wait till My return." Cartophilus, who was then thirty years old, and who has always returned to that age when he has completed a hundred years, has ever since been awaiting the coming of the Lord and the end of the world. This wretched man, who must exist in spite of his longing for death, and desperate efforts at self-destruction, is further said to be possessed with a spirit of restlessness which makes him ceaselessly wander over the face of the earth.

Who cannot see the application of this legend to the whole tribe of the "wandering foot and weary breast"? More than eighteen hundred years ago, when Israel insulted their Messiah, and hastened Him to the cross, Jesus, with a pitiful but disappointed look, turned to them, and said: "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him; but this generation shall not pass away until all these

things be fulfilled; for I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say: Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.[1] Forthwith Israel, taken possession of by a spirit of restlessness, had to take staff in hand, and gird his loins, and commence his wanderings amongst the nations. Still they are on their weary march, which has already extended over a period of nearly two millenniums.

How often has not my people built a nest for itself, and said: "Here let us rest!" But, as often has God put His hand under the nest and said: "Arise and depart, for *this is not your resting-place*!"

> "That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say: We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries" (Ezekiel xx. 32).

If God had cast away His people which He foreknew, He would have let them alone to go to national destruction and amalgamation, which they courted; but no, even in these repeated dispersions and long-continued wanderings and chastisements, we see God's faithfulness to His covenants, and love for His people. Israel gives us the picture, on a national scale, of God's dealings

[1] Hosea ix. 17.

with a backslider. And surely it is in love and mercy that rest and peace are taken from those that wander from God. If the prodigal in the far country had found what his heart desired, he might never have turned his thoughts to his father and his home.

> "Thou turnest man to the very dust, and sayest, Turn, O children of men!" (Psalm xc. 3, Heb.).

Each stroke, each separate edict of banishment from one country or the other, which has, as it were, been God's word of command to the nation to resume its long march, each calamity and wrong which has befallen the dispersed people, has been a call from God: "Turn ye! turn ye! from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

> "If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land" (Leviticus xxvi. 41, 42).

But the day is not far distant when God will heal their backslidings;[1] and then at the cross, where they commenced, Israel's wanderings and dispersions will cease. "Jacob shall return, and be in rest, and be quiet; and none shall make him afraid." Meanwhile, though scattered and peeled,

[1] Hosea xiv. 4.

tossed about among the nations, and finding no rest for the sole of their feet, Israel's preservation is guaranteed.

> "For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee with judgment, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jer. xxx. 11, R.V.).

This agrees with what the same prophet says in another place:

> "Thus hath Jehovah said, The whole land shall be desolate, yet will I not make a full end" (Jer. iv. 27).

And again, in giving His mandate to the nations to "go up upon her walls and destroy," He is careful to put in the reservation clause, "but make not a full end."[1] We also read in Amos ix. 8:

> "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah."

Let the miracle of the continued existence of the Jewish people bear witness to Jehovah's faithfulness to His promises, as well as to His threatenings. By the word of God was this nation first brought into existence; and by the word of God it continues to exist, and nothing can move it.

[1] Jeremiah v. 10.

It surely is not necessary to remind the world that there are no thanks due to the Gentile nations—especially not to professed Christendom—that there is such a being as a Jew now left on the face of the earth. What force or influence is there, which might be supposed to tend to the utter extermination of the people, which has not been brought to bear upon them with terrible severity for many centuries? On whatever else the nations of the earth were divided, they were at one on this point; and, to use the language of Psalm lxxxiii. 4, which will be the war cry of the final great confederacy of the nations who will assemble against Jerusalem, they have said:

> "Come, let us cut them off from being a nation;
> That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."

Popes, councils, bishops, monks, kings, and peoples, seemed equally enraged against them, and equally determined on their extermination. To effect this, every expedient has been tried, but all have equally failed. Let me remind the reader of a few typical actions on the part of the great representatives of the Gentile world, to illustrate their attitude to Israel.

Pharaoh, the head of the Gentile world of his time, conceived the idea of a policy of

extermination against the chosen people, and he tried the expedient of *water*. "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river," was the stern edict. But what was the result? Israel ultimately passed the water ordeal in safety; not only the River Nile, but also the Red Sea. But note the retributive justice of God: the very means which he had planned for the extermination of God's people were chosen for his own destruction. *Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned!*

Once again Israel was in bondage, though for a short period; and the great head of the Gentile world at that time, Nebuchadnezzar—with whom pre-eminently began the "times of the Gentiles"—tried how it would do to destroy these Jews by *fire*. Three Hebrew youths, because they would not serve his gods, nor worship the golden image which he had set up, were cast into the "burning fiery furnace," heated one seven times more than it was wont; however, the fire had no power over the bodies of these Jewish men, nor was a hair of their head singed, but the flames slew those men who threw them into the furnace.

Darius, another great monarch of the Gentile world, tried the expedient of throwing one Jew, the representative of his people, to wild beasts. But God sent His angel and shut the lions'

mouths, so that they did not hurt him; although these same lions had the mastery of Daniel's enemies, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Were these occurrences mere chance? Oh no! they were in fulfilment of that wonderful promise, primarily given to Israel as a nation:

> "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah xliii. 2).

Coming to more modern times, it may well be said that no weapon that was forged against Israel prospered, and every tongue that rose up against them in judgment was contemned. Whenever there arose a Haman, who planned their destruction, there was an Esther or a Mordecai foreordained. Behold, He that keepeth Israel did neither slumber nor sleep. Hence it comes to pass, that after nearly two thousand years of dispersion, untold and unheard-of sufferings, confiscations, violence, tortures, massacres, banishments, and systematic oppressions, the Jewish nation has proved indestructible; and not only *exists*, but exists in larger numbers to-day than in the most palmy days of David and Solomon, and shows no

symptoms of an exhaustion of the early vigour of their national life.

Note the eloquent appeal of a Jew: "Braving all kinds of torments—the pangs of death, and still more terrible pangs of life—we have withstood the impetuous storm of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course nations, religions, and countries. What has become of those celebrated empires, whose very name still excites our admiration by the idea of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power embraced the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Greece are no more; their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin; while a population of a few millions of men, so often subjugated, stands the test of revolving ages, and the fiery ordeal of eighteen centuries of persecution. We still preserve laws that were given to us in the first days of the world, in the infancy of nature. The last followers of a religion which had embraced the universe have disappeared these eighteen centuries, and our temples are still standing. We alone have been spared by the indiscriminating hand of time, like a column left standing amid the wreck of worlds and the ruins of nature. The

history of our people connects present times with the first ages of the world, by the testimony it bears to the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind; it is likely to be preserved to the very day of universal destruction."[1]

> "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever. Thus saith Jehovah, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith Jehovah" (Jeremiah xxxi. 35–37).

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[1] Michael Beers, Appeal to the Justice of Kings.

V.

A Dark Picture:

Or, a Contrast Between the Human and the Divine Side of the Jewish Problem.

"FOR thus saith Jehovah, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with a wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee" (Jeremiah xxx. 12–15).

But, lest the Gentiles should mix themselves in God's controversy with His people, and say, as they have done: "God hath cast them off; come, let us destroy Israel from being a nation," there is put in, as a parenthesis, the warning:

"Therefore, all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all they that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah; because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (Jeremiah xxx. 16, 17).

What a picture of Israel! Some people are fond of drawing gloomy outlines of the present state of the Jews; and this may suit their tastes, for surely they could not present a darker one than what is here portrayed by God's own hand. The Jew is represented here as in a *helpless* and *hopeless* condition. He is helpless. The figure is that of a sick man lying, bruised and wounded, and having no remedy within reach. I say, "a sick man lying," because the words translated, "thou hast no healing medicines," may literally be rendered: "Thou hast no medicines to raise thee up."

Behold this bruised and wounded man, O church of Christ; and may God give you the heart of the Good Samaritan and the compassion of Jesus! Do you realize the present helplessness of poor Israel? We sometimes hear the Jews spoken of by Christians of a certain stamp, after this manner: "After all, they are not so badly off as the heathen. They are a moral, God-fearing people; they have the Old Testament Scriptures in their possession. They are intelligent, clever, influential, and certainly not so low and degraded as the heathen."

The answer of God to all this is: "Thou hast no healing medicines." The Jew has the Scriptures; but what if they testify not to him of Jesus Christ, in whom alone, and not in the letter of the Scriptures, is eternal life?

And, think of it, whoever you are, who have some such thoughts as the above in your mind! Is not the Jew a sinner? Has not God said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die?" Has not Jesus Christ said: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins?" Must the Son of God come down from heaven to die on the cross in order to save *you*, and can the Jew be saved by morality? Must you have a Saviour to comfort you in your sorrow and in the hour of death, and can the Jew do without Him?

Out of Christ, it is not a question what a man has; but what he *has not*. If a sick man were lying in a room fitted up with shelves full of bottles of all sorts of drugs, what avail would it be to him if the only remedy which could alone save him were wanting? "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son" (be he never so moral, wise, and influential), "hath not life."

You say: "Granted Israel's case is helpless; but have you not just said that it is also *hopeless*?" Does not God say: "Thy bruise is *incurable*; thy wound is grievous": and again, in the fifteenth verse: "*Thy sorrow is incurable* for the multitude of thine iniquity!"

Yes, altogether *hopeless*, as well as *helpless*, from the human standpoint; but search and see: you will not find either of these words in the vocabulary of God. Helpless! Hopeless!—"Is the arm of Jehovah shortened at all that it cannot save?" "Behold," says God, through Jeremiah, in relation to this very subject, "I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh; is there *anything* too hard for Me?"[1] "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty (or "hidden," "fortified," or "inaccessible") things, which thou knowest not."[2] "Thy bruise is incurable, thy wound is grievous," says man. "I will restore health unto thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds," says Jehovah.

Is not the Church of Christ guilty in this matter of limiting the "Holy One of Israel"? Has it not been guilty of scepticism and unbelief in the declaration of the inspired Apostle to the Gentiles, that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation . . to the Jew first"?[3] Who speaks of hopelessness on God's part in the matter of a

[1] Jer. xxxii. 27. [2] Jer. xxxiii. 3. [3] Romans i. 16.

sinner's salvation? Search and see! Has Christ ever sent away any case because it was beyond His power to cure? There were many hopeless incurables who came to Jesus when He was on earth. There were many such at the Pool of Bethesda. I suppose that poor woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, and who spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, was as hopeless a case as you might wish; but she only touched the hem of His garment, and immediately she was healed.

Look again at Israel. In this chapter which we are considering, he is likened to a hopelessly sick man. When you come to Ezekiel xxxvii, the sick man has died; and, like Lazarus in the grave, by this time he not only stinketh, but his flesh has rotted away and all there is left of him is a heap of dry bones strewn over the open valley.

> "Son of man, can these dry bones live? . . . So I prophesied as He commanded me; and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Look at another figure of unbelieving Israel, in Romans xi. They are compared to broken-off branches of the brittle olive-tree. Can these broken-off fragments be made once again to live and bear fruit? Yes,—

> "God is able to graft them in again. For if thou (Gentile) wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, how much more shall these (Israelites) which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!" (Romans xi. 23, 24).

> "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah. Because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (Jeremiah xxx. 17).

Those not acquainted with the original lose very much of the force of this last verse. Some Christians are very fond of the term "Zion" as a name for the Church, and they speak of "our Zion." They may be surprised to learn that "Zion" in the Hebrew means a "desert," "barrenness," or, as it is translated in Isaiah (xxv. 5) "a dry place." Now, note the force of this taunting reproach. "They," (the Gentiles), "called thee Zion"—a barren desert, good for nothing, and which therefore, "no man seeketh after." Now, just *because* it is so unpromising a plot of ground, God is going to take it in hand, and once again "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Blessed be God, it is just like Him! He always takes the most unpromising materials to accomplish most glorious ends.

Look at Israel in the past. Why did God

choose them? Was it because they were more in number than other peoples? Was it because of their goodness or righteousness? No: they were the fewest of all people; and as Moses solemnly testifies to them:

> "Understand therefore, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people" (Deut. ix. 6).

But Israel's very stiff-neckedness and barrenness gave occasion for the greater display of God's power and the infinitude of His grace. All the greater glory and credit to the great Husbandman, that the unpromising vine which He brought out of Egypt flourished so wonderfully, that

> "She sent out her boughs unto the sea,
> And her branches unto the river.
> The hills were covered with the shadow of it;
> And the boughs thereof were like cedars of God."
> (Psalm lxxx. 10, 11.)

Can any good thing come out of Zion? Yes: an Abraham, a Moses, a David, an Isaiah, a Paul—a CHRIST!

Alas! in a moment of God's righteous anger, this garden of the Lord has become withered, as if smitten by some sirocco blast. "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it." They called thee "an outcast," saying, "This is Zion, whom no man sceketh after;" but the miracle of the past will yet be repeated and intensified. Zion, in God's hand, is yet to be turned into the very "perfection of beauty;"[1] and the barren fig-tree shall again "bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit."

"But," some will say, "Israel's restoration and conversion, according to your own showing, is a work which can only be accomplished by the power of God. What then ought to be the attitude of the Church in relation to this matter? What can *we* do?" True, Israel's *restoration* depends not on anything man can do, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."[2] We may well leave this in the hands of Him in whose power alone are the times and seasons, and whose counsels and purposes shall stand for ever, and are independent of all human strength and human means. Although God specially proclaims the fact of Israel's restoration to the Gentile nations, and in the isles afar off, showing that it is most important for them to *know* it, yet He nowhere commands them to bring it about.

[1] Psalm l. 2. [2] Jeremiah xxxi. 10.

Again, the work of *conversion*—whether of individuals or of nations, whether of Jews or of Gentiles—is always a work which only the power of God can accomplish; but that does not mean that the Church of Christ is to fold her hands as she has done for many centuries, and do next to nothing. What your attitude to Israel should be, is plainly shown in the Word of God.

(1) *It should be an attitude of prayer.* Do you aspire to be one of Jehovah's remembrancers? Then hark to His command:

> "Ye that make mention of the Lord [or, *ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers*] keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah lxii. 6, 7).

Let there be the heart's desire and believing prayer unto God for Israel that they may be saved.[1]

And lest you should not know how to pray about this matter, God Himself has condescended to supply you with a form of prayer for Israel:

> "For thus saith Jehovah, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Jehovah, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel" (Jeremiah xxxi. 7).

Have compassion, have gratitude for the wonderful blessings which you have received through them as

[1] Romans x. 1.

the channel, yea, has God's clear word of command, ever made your heart to go out after this manner in the prayer of faith for poor sick Israel?

(2) *It should be an attitude of service.* When Ezekiel was made by the Spirit of God to pass through and round about the "dry bones" in the valley of vision, the Lord put the question to him, "Son of man, can these dry bones live?" And the prophet's answer was: "O Lord God, Thou knowest!" as much as to say: "It is certainly beyond the power of man to do anything in such a case. The giving of life, whether physical or spiritual, is Thy prerogative and in Thy power; Thou alone must do it—O Lord God, Thou knowest!"

But there followed a command from the great God which must have seemed strange to the prophet. "Yes," said Jehovah, "life is My prerogative, and I am going to bestow it: 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, . . and will put My spirit in you, and ye shall live.' *But*, son of man, *there is something which you must do*, so that the life which I alone can give may come to these dead bones. '*Prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah.*'"

Now, this is precisely what the Church has neglected to do; and yet it wonders that there has been no noise, no mighty shaking, or many signs of life among the dry bones.

O ye Christians who are fond of speaking of "Jewish unbelief," and have a pious aversion to poor Israel, because he calls not on the name of Christ, "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher"? Know ye not that *faith cometh by hearing*, and hearing by the Word of God? And know ye not that for centuries and centuries the gospel of their own Messiah has been withheld from them; and the name of the Blessed Saviour was made to be blasphemed among them by the terrible cruelties which have been perpetrated on them, and the awful caricature of Christ which has been presented to them by those who have professed His name; and that to this day, in spite of a few recent, inadequate, and not always wisely-directed efforts, the great mass of the Jewish nation is left in perfect ignorance of the holy name of Christ, and of the very existence of such a book as the New Testament?

You believe that Gentiles can only be born again by the Spirit of God: yet you do not expect those to whom the gospel has not been preached to believe and call on the name of Christ! Those among Israel who have heard the glad tidings of salvation through their crucified and risen Messiah *have not all disbelieved it*; and it is a matter of fact—which, however, those not informed on this subject may be surprised to hear—that, in spite of difficulties and terrible disappointments, there is no modern mission so hopeful, or which has produced such glorious results in conversion, or the converts from which have, by their usefulness and service to the Church universal, so abundantly rewarded all the efforts put forth, as the Jewish field.

But how, some may ask, does this advocacy of the evangelization of the Jews tally with what has been shown in an earlier chapter—that Israel, as a nation, will not be converted until after their restoration and the re-appearance of their Messiah upon whom they shall look and mourn?

Why, in the same manner as the evangelization of all the *Gentile* nations is consistent with the plain teaching of the Word of God: that not one of them, *as a nation*, will be converted before Christ's return, and the conversion of Israel.

Our commission is not to *convert* any one people or nation, but to evangelize all—to "go into all the

world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; and the results of this work of universal evangelization have been already foretold. As far as Israel is concerned, "a remnant according to the election of grace" will be called out to call Jesus "blessed" now; while *all Israel* shall be saved by and by, when the Redeemer comes out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.[1] And, as regards the Gentiles, God has visited them in this dispensation by the preaching of the gospel, "to take out of them a people for His Name"; while "*all the Gentiles*" are left over to the time when the same Jesus who was taken up into heaven shall so, and in like manner, come back from heaven.

IF DAVID BARON SENT THIS IN JUL-AUG 1890 WHAT SHOULD WE SENSE ?

Oh, fellow Christian, time is short! Already there are abundant signs that long scattered and long neglected Israel is hastening back to his land to pass through ere long that fiery ordeal and furnace awaiting him in Zion. Perhaps the most significant fact in this connection, is the formation of the Jewish, almost universal, "Chovevi Zion Association," which seems destined, after centuries of dispersion, to bind all the scattered fragments of the people into one national force, with the

[1] Romans xi. 5, 26.

ostensible aim of regaining possession of the land of their fathers. The following are the chief objects of the Association, which I copy from their book of "Rules for Members," printed in Hebrew and English: "(*a*) To foster the national idea in Israel. (*b*) To promote the Colonisation of Palestine and neighbouring territories by Jews. (*c*) To diffuse the knowledge of Hebrew as a living language." "The Land" also is now being rapidly opened up, after all these many centuries, during which it was kept locked, and in its desolate condition as a stereotyped Commentary on "The Book." The nations of the earth—buried beneath the loads of vice, ignorance, and superstition—are now opening their gates and doors, and inarticulately, without even the power to express their need, beckon to you to come over and help them. The distant sounds of our Master's chariots are already heard, and Jesus Christ is coming quickly to render to every man according to his work.

> "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" (Proverbs xxiv. 11, 12).

Who will be up and doing? Who will rise to the Lord's help against the mighty? Who by their prayers and substance will help to carry the gospel message to poor scattered Israel? "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord" (Acts xv. 16, 17).

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans xi. 33-36.)

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Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel.

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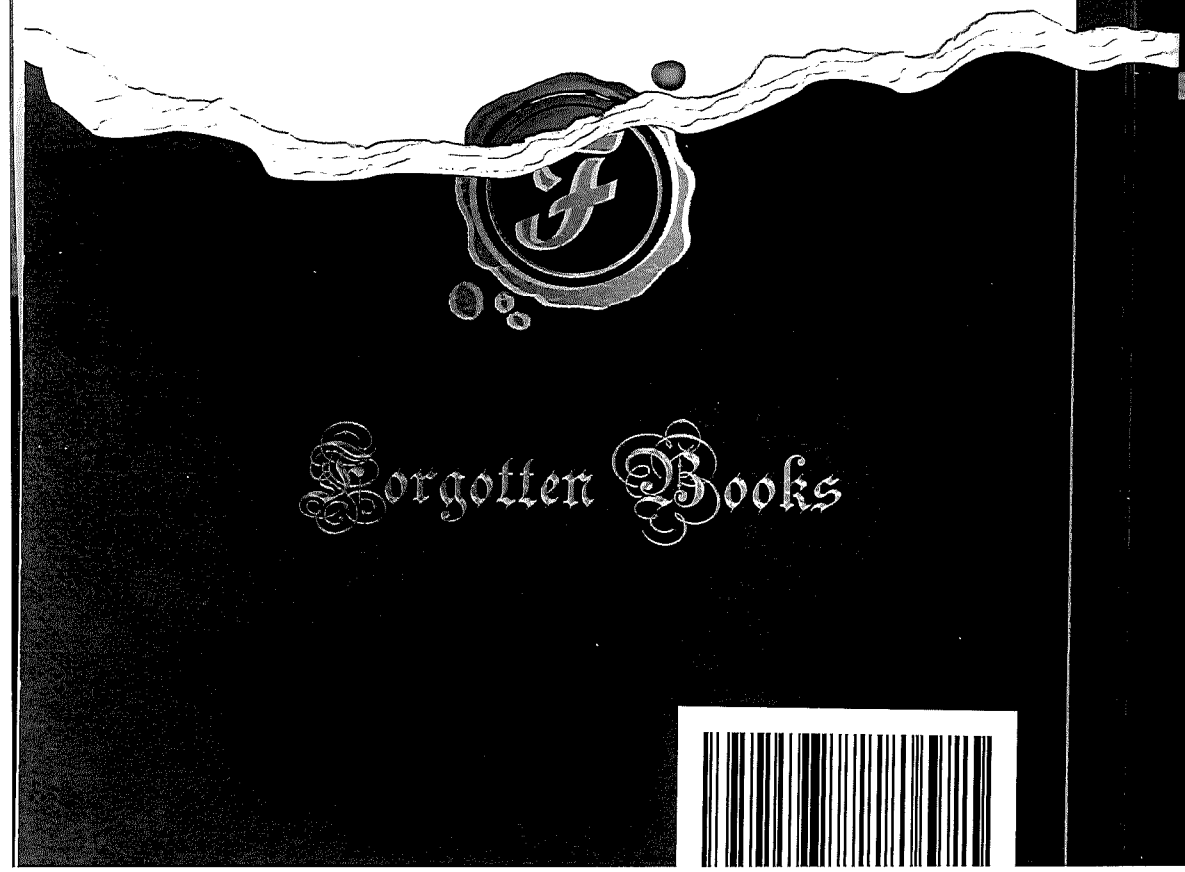

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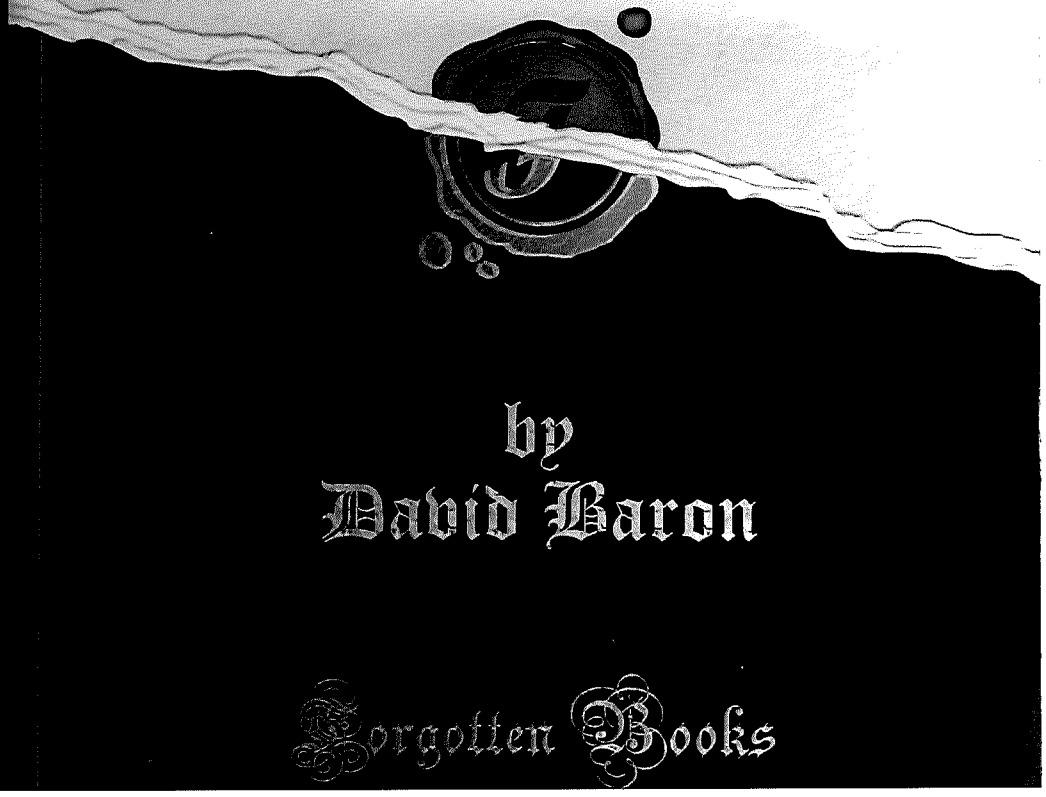

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